

Bruce Moore  
Cape Elizabeth  
LD 2224

Dear Senator Carney, Rep. Moonen and members of the Judiciary Committee.

I urge your support for LD 2224 including expanded background checks and improved mental health services for Mainers. My best friend from college days took his own life with a firearm. He was a highly-skilled and well-educated man who over time developed a substance use disorder and mental health issues. He had periods of sobriety but also periods when he succumbed to substance misuse, was arrested on various charges and jailed numerous times. He became a convicted felon when, after a bitter dispute with his neighbors, he broke the windows of his neighbor's house. His anger, hostility and threatening behaviors alienated nearly all his friends and family. Sadly, he did not get the mental health treatment he needed.

As a convicted felon, he was not permitted to have a firearm but over the years obtained several guns easily from Uncle Henry's where a background check was not required. I was concerned he would harm himself because he had threatened suicide, loaded gun in hand, on multiple occasions. I was also concerned he would unintentionally harm other people when he was in pain, desperate and out of control.

After years of spiraling downward, he took his own life with a firearm which, legally, should not have been in his possession. Eighty nine percent of all gun deaths in Maine are suicides and the rate of gun suicide has increased 45% from 2012 to 2021 compared to a 19% increase nationwide. We need improved mental health services for Mainers and expanded background checks to prevent people from obtaining firearms illegally. I urge your support of LD 2224, An Act to Strengthen Public Safety by Improving Maine's Firearm Laws and Mental Health System. It will save the lives of Maine people.

Thank you.